(d) Due to sugar cess imposed on sugar, the price of domestic sugar increases by that extent, which is presently Rs. 14 per quintal.

(e) Cane cost constitutes around 60% of the All-India Average Ex-factory Price of Levy Sugar for the season 1996-97. The taxes are (i) Central Excise duty on levy sugar, Rs. 38 per quintal, on levy-free sugar, Rs. 71 per quintal, and (ii) Sugar cess Rs. 14 per quintal.

(f) The Release Mechanism is regulated in a judicious manner in order to maintain the price of sugar in open market at a reasonable level to the consumer and also to ensure a reasonable return to the producers to enable them to pay remunerative cane price to the growers.

Public and Private Sector Investment in Agriculture Sector

3307. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public and Private Sectors investment in agriculture sector has been kept low during this year in comparison to the last year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of the States whose condition has become worse due to low investment in the agriculture sector;

(d) whether the Government have prepared any scheme to increase the investment in agriculture sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b) As per the latest available information, the total investment or gross capital formation in agriculture sector at 1980-81 prices during 1994-95 and 1995-96 is as under:—

Gross Capital Formation in Agriculture (at 1980-81 prices)

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Public	Private	Total
1994-95	1329	4349	5678
1995-96	1310	4991	6301
%age change in 1995-96 over 1994-95	(–)1.4	(+)14.8	(+)11.0

The above table shows that the total as well as private investment in agriculture has increased. However, there has been a marginal decline in the public investment due to diversion of resources from investment to current expenditure.

(c) The State-wise details are not available. However, the gross capital formation in agriculture in the country has generally been showing a rising trend during the 90s.

(d) and (e) During 8th Plan Period (1992-97) significant level of investment has been made in favour of agriculture and allied activities like horticulture fisheries, rainfed farming, creation of infrastructure for minor irrigation and post harvest management for which specific schemes are being implemented. In order to further encourage investment for infrastructure in agriculture, a new Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) within National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been established to provide credit for medium and minor irrigation and solid conservation projects. A provision has been made to increase share capital of NABARD from Rs. 500 crore in 1996-97 to Rs. 2000 crore in next five years. Under another new scheme of Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) initiated during 1996-97, a provision of Rs. 1300 crore (BE) has been kept during 1997-98 for providing assistance to States by way of loan for timely completion of selected large and multiple purpose irrigation projects.

[English]

Decline in Farm Lands Due to Excessive Use of Pesticides

3308. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farm lands are getting degraded due to the excessive use of pesticides;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that exported farm goods worth Rs. 1000 crores have been rejected by the Western countries due to the presence of pesticides;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.